7. SKETCH OF ME'EN GRAMMAR

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1. Introduction

Me'en is spoken mainly in northern Maji Awraja, Kefa Province, by the group called Tishena, and by the Bodi on the eastern side of the Omo River in Gemu Gofa (according to Muldrow, unpublished material mentioned in Bender 1975: 39). Bender 1971: 223 estimated their total number at about 38,000, so at the present time they may well exceed 40,000.

Apart from some more general comparative work on Nilo-Saharan languages where Me'en has been included, only Ricci (1972) has published a fairly recent major contribution on Me'en. It must be noted, however, that he did his analysis solely on the basis of language notes provided by Dr. Fulvio Sudano, who lived in the Tishena area between 1939 and 1941. Therefore, some of his material will be outdated by now, and there are a number of inconsistencies (of which some will be pointed out below) that may be due to Ricci's lack of actual Me'en field-experience.

In the present article I attempt to provide a general sketch of Me'en grammar. This paper cannot claim to be exhaustive and final but should be considered a basis for more detailed research in the future.

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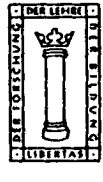

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